



DAWLISH

SWIMMING CLUB

Competition Guide for Parents and Swimmers

Swimmer Classification

Dawlish SC is affiliated to the ASA and our swimmers, coaches, officials, and helpers are all registered members.

Members are allocated into one of three categories:

Category 1

Young swimmers in Learn to Swim and swimmers in our competitive squads who are under 9 years of age are registered in category 1. Category 1 membership provides insurance whilst the swimmer is at training and for a limited amount of small galas such as our Club Championships.

Category 2

Swimmers over the age of 9 years who train with our competitive squads need to be registered as category 2 swimmers. This category of membership provides access to the swimming rankings system and offers insurance to swimmers at training, club events and competitions.

Category 3

Category 3 membership is for parent helpers and volunteers who wish to help out with the running of our club.



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Types of Swimming Competition

League galas are team events where the whole team competes against other clubs, gaining points for each race. League galas are usually made up of individual races and team/relay races for the different age groups.

Open Meets are advertised by the club and are licenced meets for anyone who is eligible to take part. These events are individual races with the fastest swimmers gaining medals/trophies.

Long Course or Short Course?

Details of what 'course' a meet is will be on the meet information pack – usually described as LC or SC. Short course meets are swum in a 25m pool (same as Dawlish leisure centre) and long course meets are swum in a 50m pool. Most meets are swum short course whilst long course meets are targeted towards regional and national standards of competition.

What are licensed meets?

Licensed meets are swimming galas that comply with a standard set of ASA licensing requirements. All times achieved at licensed meets are official and get published on a rankings database.

The level of the meet can be used to identify the purpose of the competition:

Level 4 is for those beginning to enter individual competitions. These competitions are generally hosted by a local club. Usually with upper limit/cut off times

Level 3 is again, for entry level swimmers. Entries generally have cut-off/upper limit times. Can be short course or long course. Times achieved here can be used for entry to Level 1 meets, regional and county championships

Level 2 is aimed at Regional qualifiers and swimmers close to Regional qualification. They require qualifying times to enter.

Level 1 is the highest level of competitive swimming aimed at National qualifiers and swimmers close to National qualification. Opportunity to achieve international qualifying times. Always long course.

Please note: For level 1, 2 and 3 meets the swimmer needs to be registered with ASA Category 2 membership.



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Qualifying times / Upper Limit Times / Cut off Times:

A **qualifying time** is the time that the swimmer ***must have already achieved*** in order to enter an event at the competition.

Upper limit/cut off times are times set by a competition organiser that a swimmer ***must be slower than*** to be able to swim at the competition.

Qualifying times or cut off times will be included in the competition meet pack so please look out for these and check before submitting an entry for your swimmer(s).

Swimmers' Entry Times:

Whenever possible Dawlish Swimming Club records and retains the times achieved by our swimmers. This will include not only times achieved at licensed competitions, but all events we take part in (club, friendly and team events).

Which times can be used?

The meet pack for a given competition usually states whether (1) times need to have been achieved at licensed meet and appear on rankings and (2) how recently the times need to have been swum.

If this is ever unclear, please ask your coach or contact our competition secretary.

As a general rule, Most L3, L4, and friendly competitions will accept club recorded times regardless of whether they appear on the rankings database.

L1, L2, County, Regional, and National events will always require times to have been achieved at licensed competitions and appear on the rankings database.

Swimmers' times achieved at licensed competitions can be found here:

<https://www.swimmingresults.org/individualbest/> (simply enter the swimmer surname or membership number to locate their times)

The database is a great tool to take a look at. It records every swim and provides graphs and other useful performance data. Event rankings can also be accessed on this site.



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Time conversions

This is particularly relevant when you wish to enter a long course meet but only have short course times. At the majority of swim meets, time conversions are permitted from short course to long course or vice versa. The following website has a tool which can convert these times:

<http://www.pullbuoy.co.uk/times>

Entering swimming competitions

Please read through all documents (not just the entry form). Ensure you check age groups, what events your child can enter, and when they are.

Determine whether a swimmer is eligible to enter the competition by checking the level and qualifying/ cut-off times associated with the competition – please ask your coach or the competition secretary if you are unsure.

Complete the entry form and hand it in to the club desk before the closing date stated with cash or cheque made payable to Dawlish Swimming Club.



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Team Competitions

Are competitions where swimmers are selected to compete for the club as a team against other clubs, rather than individually. Swimmers will be selected to swim certain events for the best possible team outcome. A list of selected swimmers will be advertised on the club noticeboard, via email and Facebook. We will aim to give as much notice as practically possible to swimmers and parents.

If you are selected to swim for the club please make your best efforts to be available.

Below are some examples of competitions we enter:

National Swimming League (Arena) This competition is held over three rounds on the 2nd Saturday of each month from October, to December. Galas are held at locations across the South West of England and South Wales. The team normally travels by coach. Dawlish Swimming Club has a “Win at All Cost” policy for this league. The fastest swimmers will be selected even if this means younger swimmers swimming an age group higher. Swimmers are expected to attend even if they are only swimming in a relay as every swimmer makes a valuable contribution to the team effort.

Devon County Interclub This gala is held in Plymouth in June. Parents are requested to deliver and collect their children to the gala venue. Dawlish SC has a “Win at All Cost” policy for this competition. See above.

East Devon Mini League Galas are held at local venues such as Dawlish, Newton Abbot, Exeter and Exmouth. Faster swimmers are excluded from this event giving others a chance to compete and gain experience with the club.

Devon and Cornwall League These galas are held over three rounds at Plymouth in May, June and July. We wish the club to perform well and make every effort in this league. However, more swimmers of an eligible age from across the squads are offered the opportunity to compete and gain experience in a senior team competition. If there are race/relay spaces to fill in older age categories, younger swimmers will be asked to fill these spaces with a focus on doing their best and gaining valuable experience. No matter what place we come in an event, race points will still be awarded.



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What should I bring to a gala?

The following is a general guide of what to take to a competition:

- Two Towels
- Trunks/Costumes
- Goggles (including a spare set)
- X 2 Swim Hats
- T-shirt
- Warm hooded top and trousers
- Plenty of healthy snacks & drinks
- Shoes such as flip flops so you have footwear to leave the poolside if necessary – many venues do not allow swimmers to walk bare foot other than poolside and some require shoes to be worn at all times including poolside.

It is preferred that you wear Dawlish Swimming Club team kit when representing the club – a minimum of Club hat and T-shirt is advised. Club kit can be ordered from the club desk or website.

Arrival at a competition

Please aim to arrive and be ready on poolside **at least 15mins** before the first warm up is scheduled to start.

On arrival at a gala, a swimmer should first get changed and bring everything needed with them poolside.

Look for your team / coach and sign in with your Team Manager(s).

Once signed in stay with the rest of the team and sit together once you have got changed.

Warm up sessions will start at the advertised times, the Team Managers will let you know when you are required to warm up. A warm up session gives swimmers the opportunity to do approximately 10mins of continuous swimming followed by 5mins of diving and sprinting. In busy meets the warm ups are usually separated into boys and girls and age groups – see meet information for warm up times.

It is advisable to wear poolside clothes after warm up and between races. This will keep your muscles warm, ready for your race.



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The Team Manager will tell you which events you are swimming in. **DO NOT** leave the poolside area without letting the Team Manager know.

Always be ready to start your race as no one will wait for you if you aren't there or have forgotten your goggles.

Remember you are part of a team, so cheer on your team-mates when they swim and always create a good impression as you are representing Dawlish Swimming Club.

Parents' guide to surviving Open Meets

You will need to make sure you have planned the day or weekend. Getting to the event can be tricky and sometimes involves a very early start. Pack plenty of food to get through the day as you will be at the event for a long time.

Parking can also be somewhat difficult but if you arrive in plenty of time this isn't usually an issue. Here are some parking tips:

- Plymouth – main Life Centre car park or park and ride/Plymouth Argyle car park behind the centre. Free parking.
- Tiverton – secondary school 5min walk away, usually well sign posted when a gala is on – you are not allowed to park in the leisure centre car park.
- Millfield – car park at the top of the school (5-10min walk through the campus to the pool)
- Bristol – main Hengrove car park

Once you have ensured that your swimmer is poolside with everything they need. Take your seats and enjoy the competition!

Most meets will have an area for parents to watch the gala. There is usually a spectator entrance fee and programmes will often be available to purchase. So make sure you have some money with you.

Your child will often be seated in another part of the pool with parents restricted from the swimmer area. The kids all try to cheer each other on and parents are encouraged to cheer for the children as loud as they like to spur them on during races! At Dawlish we all try to sit together as it helps keep up the team atmosphere.

Above all, despite all the trials of getting to an open meet they are good fun and if lots of children are there they all enjoy each other's company and entertain themselves through the day. Parents can have a good old chat too!



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The main reason for entering these competitions is to achieve qualifying times that will allow a swimmer entry into county, regional and national competitions. It also allows the coaches and teachers to see progress and to further improve a swimmer's technique. Entering a variety of these competitions will increase a swimmer's confidence in a live setting and hopefully help you see continued progression by swimming faster times at each competition and improved individualised feedback.

FAQ's

How much does it cost to take part in swimming competitions?

Team events and friendly galas are often club funded or free to take part in.

Licensed meets typically cost between £4-6 per race

How do I find out about competitions the club is entering?

Competitions will be advertised by the club via email, our group Facebook page, club noticeboard, and website.

If you are concerned that you are not receiving information, please contact us.

Is my child ready for competitions and which events should he/she enter?

The best person to provide advice on this is your child's coach. The best time to have a chat is before or after training or to contact the coach directly via email.

What is a disqualification (DQ) and why did it happen?

Most swimmers get disqualified numerous times during competitive swimming. This can occur for a variety of technical reasons and is very easily done! Although this can be frustrating it should be considered as one of the learning curves in swimming!

Disqualification can occur for reasons such as moving on the blocks, incorrect stroke technique and when turning at the end of the pool to name just a few. A reason will always be provided by meet officials.

Swimmers or parents should not be concerned about this as coaches will explain and seek to remedy any mistakes made in training.



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My child is worried about an upcoming competition, what should I do?

Competitions particularly the first few your child enters can be a daunting experience for both swimmers and parents. There are plenty of experienced Dawlish parents and swimmers at the club attending competitions. You can always ask them for advice/help and they will be happy to answer any of your questions or point you in the direction of someone who can!

The important thing to remember is that swimming is very much an individual sport. The focus should be on self-improvement over time and everyone has to start somewhere!

First time competitors need only be concerned with recording their first set of times and seek to improve on these gradually through training and technical improvement.

What are County, Regional, and National Championships?

County Championships: (Jan – Feb) Annual competition for all competitive swimmers in Devon. All swimmers who achieve qualifying times should enter.

Regional Championships: (May-June) Annual competition for all competitive swimmers from clubs in the southwest region. All swimmers who achieve qualifying times should enter.

National Championships: Winter Nationals are swum Short Course in December. British Championships is swum in April every year and will often double up as Olympic or World trials. Summer Nationals are swum at the end of July and beginning of August.

There are 2 championships – British Nationals and ASA Nationals. Swimmers with the top 24 ranked times in their age group at the end of the qualifying window will be invited to the British Summer Championships. The next top 20 ranked English swimmers in their age group will then be invited to the ASA Summer Championships.

We hope you have found this guide a useful reference for understanding competitive swimming!

Should you have any further questions or queries please contact competitionsdawlishsc@outlook.com or speak to your child's coach.